AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

1. (Previously Presented) An isolated alkaline protease consisting of an amino acid sequence wherein one or more amino acid residues selected from those located at (a) position 63, (b) position 89, (c) position 120, (d) positions 63 and 187, (e) position 226, (f) position 296, (g) position 304 of the amino acid sequence of SEQ ID NO: 1 are the following amino acid residues, respectively: (a) serine, (b) histidine, (c) arginine, (d) serine, (e) tyrosine, (f) valine, and (g) serine, and wherein said isolated alkaline protease has alkaline protease activity.

2. (Previously Presented) An isolated alkaline protease having an amino acid sequence of SEQ ID NO: 1 or an amino acid sequence having at least 98.1% homology with the amino acid sequence of SEQ ID NO: 1, wherein one or more amino acid residues selected from those located at (a) position 63, (b) position 89, (c) position 120, (d) positions 63 and 187, (e) position 226, (f) position 296, (g) position 304 of the amino acid sequence of SEQ No: 1, or at positions corresponding to these positions, are the following amino acid residues, respectively: (a) serine, (b) histidine, (c) arginine, (d) serine, (e) tyrosine, (f) valine, and (g) serine, and wherein said isolated alkaline protease has alkaline protease activity.

3. – 7. (Canceled)

8. (New) The alkaline protease of Claim 1, wherein said protease has a serine residue at position 63 of SEQ ID NO: 1.

9. (New) The alkaline protease of Claim 1, wherein said protease has a histidine residue at position 89 of SEQ ID NO: 1.

10. (New) The alkaline protease of Claim 1, wherein said protease has an arginine residue at position 120 of SEQ ID NO: 1.

11. (New) The alkaline protease of Claim 1, wherein said protease has a serine residue at positions 63 and 187 of SEQ ID NO: 1.

12. (New) The alkaline protease of Claim 1, wherein said protease has a tyrosine residue at position 226 of SEQ ID NO: 1.

13. (New) The alkaline protease of Claim 1, wherein said protease has a valine residue at position 296 of SEQ ID NO: 1.

14. (New) The alkaline protease of Claim 1, wherein said protease has a serine residue at position 304 of SEQ ID NO: 1.

15. (New) The alkaline protease of Claim 1, wherein said protease has a serine residue at position 63 of SEQ ID NO: 1 and a valine residue at position 296 of SEQ ID NO: 1.

16. (New) The alkaline protease of Claim 1, wherein said protease has a arginine residue at position 120 of SEQ ID NO: 1 and a tyrosine residue at position 226 of SEQ ID NO: 1.

17. (New) The alkaline protease of Claim 2, wherein said protease has a serine residue at position 63, or at a position corresponding thereto, of SEQ ID NO: 1.

18. (New) The alkaline protease of Claim 2, wherein said protease has a histidine residue at position 89, or at a position corresponding thereto, of SEQ ID NO: 1.

19. (New) The alkaline protease of Claim 2, wherein said protease has an arginine residue at position 120, or at a position corresponding thereto, of SEQ ID NO: 1.

20. (New) The alkaline protease of Claim 2, wherein said protease has a serine residue at positions 63 and 187, or at positions corresponding thereto, of SEQ ID NO: 1.

21. (New) The alkaline protease of Claim 2, wherein said protease has a tyrosine residue at position 226, or at a position corresponding thereto, of SEQ ID NO: 1.

22. (New) The alkaline protease of Claim 2, wherein said protease has a valine residue at position 296, or at a position corresponding thereto, of SEQ ID NO: 1.

23. (New) The alkaline protease of Claim 2, wherein said protease has a serine residue at position 304, or at a position corresponding thereto, of SEQ ID NO: 1.

24. (New) The alkaline protease of Claim 2, wherein said protease has a serine residue at position 63, or at a position corresponding thereto, of SEQ ID NO: 1 and a valine residue at position 296, or at a position corresponding thereto, of SEQ ID NO: 1.

25. (New) The alkaline protease of Claim 2, wherein said protease has a arginine residue at position 120, or at a position corresponding thereto, of SEQ ID NO: 1 and a tyrosine residue at position 226, or at a position corresponding thereto, of SEQ ID NO: 1.

SUPPORT FOR THE AMENDMENTS

Claims 3-7 have been canceled.

Claims 8-25 have been added.

New Claims 8-25 are supported by original Claims 1 and 2, as well as the specification at page 9, line 10 to page 12, line 6..

The specification has also been amended. These amendments find support in the corresponding sections of the originally filed.

No new matter has been added by the present amendments.